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Security Council

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Letter dated 7 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith humanitarian and information bulletins from the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic for the period 2-7 February 2017 (see annex).

I should be grateful if this letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) V. **Churkin**

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Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 7 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Humanitarian bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (2 February 2017)

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by the Russian Federation

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides has carried out seven humanitarian operations

Three tons of bread, 2,500 portions of hot food and 250 food parcels were delivered to civilians in Aleppo city (at schools in the Halawi and Karm al-Da'da' districts; a mosque in the Hamdaniyah-4 district; near a kindergarten in Tishrin; and in the Qadi Askar neighbourhood in Old Aleppo district) and to Qumhanah in Hama governorate.

Children's backpacks with school supplies and gifts were distributed to pupils at the Hamanah Middle School in Jabla in Ladhiqiyah governorate.

In total, 5.1 tons of humanitarian cargoes were distributed to the population. Humanitarian assistance was provided to 3,000 residents.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by other States and international organizations

Russian airplanes parachuted 20.7 tons of humanitarian cargoes (food products) to the city of Dayr al-Zawr, which was received by the Syrian authorities through the United Nations.

Information bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (3 February 2017)

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, 12 ceasefire agreements have been signed with Bilaliyah, Hazrama, Hawsh al-Salihiyah, Ayn Zurayqiyah, Nashabiyah, Hazzah, Siqba, Kafr Batna, Hammuriyah, Bayt Siwa and Zamalka in Damascus governorate and with Mashtiyah in Ladhiqiyah governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,189.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire of 27 February 2016 remains unchanged at 109.

Over the past 24 hours, 56.2 square kilometres have fallen under the control of government forces. A total area of 989.8 square kilometres has been liberated since 1 January 2017.

The number of populated areas which the Syrian government forces have liberated from armed groups of the international terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) since 1 January 2017 remains unchanged at 29.

Observance of the ceasefire regime

From 0000 hours on 30 December 2016, a ceasefire came into force in accordance with the consolidated agreement on a comprehensive resolution of the Syrian crisis.

The number of Syrian opposition armed groups that have joined the ceasefire regime is unchanged — it is still 64.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the consolidated agreement has reported three violations: two in Ladhiqiyah governorate and one in Hama governorate.

The Turkish representative office has reported five violations of the consolidated agreement in the following governorates: two in Idlib, one in Damascus, one in Aleppo and one in Homs.

During its investigations of these incidents, the Russian representative office confirmed two violations of the ceasefire regime. The remaining three violations have not been confirmed.

Humanitarian bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (3 February 2017)

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by the Russian Federation

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides has carried out five humanitarian operations in Aleppo city (at schools in the Muyassar, Salah al-Din, New Aleppo and Nayrab districts and near the Bisharah al-Khuri School), during which 3.3 tons of bread and 2,000 portions of hot food were delivered to civilians.

Over the past 24 hours humanitarian assistance has been provided to 2,700 residents. In total, 3.7 tons of humanitarian cargoes have been distributed to the population.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by other States and international organizations

Russian airplanes parachuted 20.8 tons of humanitarian cargoes (food products) to the city of Dayr al-Zawr, which was received by the Syrian authorities through the United Nations.

Information bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (4 February 2017)

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, three ceasefire agreements have been signed with Fuwayrisat al-Gharbi and Fuwayrisat al-Sharqi in Ladhiqiyah governorate and Tall in Damascus governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,192.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire of 27 February 2016 remains unchanged at 109.

Over the past 24 hours, 32.5 square kilometres have fallen under the control of government forces. A total area of 1,022.3 square kilometres has been liberated since 1 January 2017.

Over the past 24 hours, Syrian government forces have liberated one populated area, Aran in Aleppo governorate, from armed groups of the international terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

The number of populated areas which Syrian government forces have liberated from armed groups of the international terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) since 1 January 2017 has increased to 30.

Observance of the ceasefire regime

From 0000 hours on 30 December 2016, a ceasefire came into force in accordance with the consolidated agreement on a comprehensive resolution of the Syrian crisis.

The number of Syrian opposition armed groups that have joined the ceasefire regime is unchanged — it is still 64.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the consolidated agreement has reported five violations: four in Hama governorate and one in Ladhiqiyah governorate.

The Turkish representative office has reported eight violations of the consolidated agreement in the following governorates: two in Aleppo, two in Idlib, two in Homs, one in Dar'a and one in Hama.

During its investigations of these incidents, the Russian representative office was unable to confirm the eight violations.

Information bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (5 February 2017)

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, three ceasefire agreements have been signed with Ayn Tarma and Jisrayn in Damascus governorate and with Bikhdarmu al-Tahta in Ladhiqiyah governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,195.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime continued with field commanders of armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire of 27 February 2016 remains unchanged at 109.

Over the past 24 hours, 145.5 square kilometres have fallen under the control of government forces. A total area of 1,167.8 square kilometres has been liberated since 1 January 2017.

The number of populated areas which Syrian government forces have liberated from armed groups of the international terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) since 1 January 2017 has increased to 32.

Observance of the ceasefire regime

From 0000 hours on 30 December 2016, a ceasefire came into force in accordance with the consolidated agreement on a comprehensive resolution of the Syrian crisis.

The number of Syrian opposition armed groups that have joined the ceasefire regime is unchanged — it is still 64.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the consolidated agreement has reported three violations: two in Ladhiqiyah governorate and one in Hama governorate.

The Turkish representative office has reported seven violations of the consolidated agreement: five in Damascus governorate, one in Aleppo governorate and one in Homs governorate.

During its investigations of these incidents, the Russian representative office was unable to confirm the seven violations.

Humanitarian bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (5 February 2017)

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by the Russian Federation

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides has carried out seven humanitarian operations in Aleppo city (in the Shaykh Najjar, Zabdiyah and Old Aleppo districts; at the Jibrin refugee camp; and at the School of Arts for Women in the Khalidiyah district) and to Shinshar in Homs governorate, during which 3.2 tons of bread, 3,000 portions of hot food and 1,850 food parcels were distributed to civilians.

Over the past 24 hours humanitarian assistance has been provided to 7,361 residents.

In total, 12.3 tons of humanitarian cargoes have been distributed to the population.

A wheelchair was delivered to Basil Muhammad, a Syrian soldier in Rami in Ladhiqiyah governorate.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by other States and international organizations

Over the past 24 hours, no humanitarian operations have been carried out in Syria by the United Nations or other foreign States.

Information bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (6 February 2017)

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, three ceasefire agreements have been signed with Harasta and the Wafidin Camp in Damascus governorate and with Btirghamu in Ladhiqiyah governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,198.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire of 27 February 2016 remains unchanged at 109.

Over the past 24 hours, 53.1 square kilometres have fallen under the control of government forces. A total area of 1,220.9 square kilometres has been liberated since 1 January 2017.

The number of populated areas which Syrian government forces have liberated from armed groups of the international terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) since 1 January 2017 has increased to 34.

Observance of the ceasefire regime

From 0000 hours on 30 December 2016, a ceasefire came into force in accordance with the consolidated agreement on a comprehensive resolution of the Syrian crisis.

The number of Syrian opposition armed groups that have joined the ceasefire regime is unchanged — it is still 64.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the consolidated agreement has reported eight violations in the following governorates: four in Ladhiqiyah, three in Hama and one in Damascus.

The Turkish representative office has reported seven violations of the consolidated agreement in the following governorates: four in Damascus, one in Aleppo, one in Idlib and one in Homs.

During its investigation of these incidents, the Russian representative office confirmed one ceasefire violation. It has not confirmed the other six incidents.

Humanitarian bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (6 February 2017)

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by the Russian Federation

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides has carried out six humanitarian operations in Aleppo city (in the Shaykh Najjar district; at schools in the Firdaws and Ashrafiyah districts; and at mosques in the Hamdaniyah-1 and Old Aleppo districts) and in Ma'raba in Damascus governorate, during which 3.5 tons of bread and 400 food parcels were distributed to civilians.

Over the past 24 hours humanitarian assistance has been provided to 2,900 residents. In total, 5.3 tons of humanitarian cargoes have been distributed to the population.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by other States and international organizations

Russian airplanes parachuted 20.7 tons of humanitarian cargoes (food products) to the city of Dayr al-Zawr, which was received by the Syrian authorities through the United Nations.

A humanitarian convoy comprising 41 automobiles of the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent was sent to Tallbissah in Homs governorate.

Information bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (7 February 2017)

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, five ceasefire agreements have been signed with Bahariyah, Dayr Salman and Marj Sultan in Damascus governorate, Bikhdarmu al-Fawqa in Ladhiqiyah governorate and Shawkatliyah in Homs governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,203.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire of 27 February 2016 remains unchanged at 109.

Over the past 24 hours, 26.2 square kilometres have fallen under the control of government forces. A total area of 1,247.1 square kilometres has been liberated since 1 January 2017.

The number of populated areas which Syrian government forces have liberated from armed groups of the international terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) since 1 January 2017 has increased to 35.

Observance of the ceasefire regime

From 0000 hours on 30 December 2016, a ceasefire came into force in accordance with the consolidated agreement on a comprehensive resolution of the Syrian crisis.

The number of Syrian opposition armed groups that have joined the ceasefire regime is unchanged — it is still 64.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the consolidated agreement has reported 11 violations in the following governorates: 5 in Ladhiqiyah, 5 in Hama and 1 in Damascus.

The Turkish representative office has reported 13 violations of the consolidated agreement in the following governorates: 4 in Aleppo, 4 in Hama, 3 in Damascus, 1 in Ladhiqiyah and 1 in Dar'a.

During its investigation of these incidents, the Russian representative office confirmed one ceasefire violation. It has not confirmed the other 12 incidents.

United Nations A/ES-10/743–S/2017/115

General Assembly
Security Council

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8 February 2017

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General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Identical letters dated 7 February 2017 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I write to you once again with great alarm about the illegal actions and provocative measures that continue to be perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Day after day, we are witness to Israel's absolute contempt for Security Council resolutions and its hostile opposition to, and in fact destruction of, the two-State solution in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions and on the basis of the 1967 lines.

In the few short weeks since the Council's adoption of resolution 2334 (2016), Israel has committed thousands of violations. The occupying Power has done this intentionally and systematically, in grave breach of international law and total disrespect for the Council's decisions and the clear calls by the international community as a whole to cease its violations and commit to peace.

Yesterday, 6 February, immediately following the decisions to advance plans for the construction of more than 5,500 settlement units in illegal settlements across the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the Israeli Knesset adopted the so-called "regularization bill", a scheme being presented as "law" with the express purpose of facilitating and authorizing the expropriation, colonization and ultimate de facto annexation of Palestinian land.

We drew attention to this specific matter in our letter of 20 December 2016 (A/ES-10/736-S/2016/1083) and are compelled to do so again today. This provocative Israeli measure constitutes a blatant attempt to "legalize" a crime. It aims at reinforcing Israel's illegal settlement enterprise and sanctifying the theft of our land, whether by Israeli settlers or the Government and its occupying forces. In this regard, we reiterate: Israeli settlement activities — regardless of their classification by the occupying Power as settlements, "settlement outposts" or otherwise and regardless of attempts to pervert the law — are illegal in every manifestation, whether on privately owned or public land in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

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Colonization is colonization, no matter how it is packaged or presented, and it is strictly prohibited. International law is clear: the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits the transfer of civilians of the occupying Power into the occupied territory; Additional Protocol I deems such measures to be grave breaches; and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court affirms that such actions constitute war crimes. No amount of legal manipulation by Israel can evade these unequivocal prohibitions.

The reality is that this "bill" is the continuation of a long line of illegal Israeli policies and practices over a half-century of occupation of the Palestinian land and oppression of the Palestinian people, violations for which the occupying Power has never been held accountable. The fact is that every single measure taken to prop up, extend and entrench this occupation — every settlement unit constructed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem; every inch of wall erected in deviation of the Green Line; every military order issued to confiscate Palestinian land or demolish a Palestinian home; every forced displacement of a Palestinian family; every killing of a civilian — child, woman or man; every arrest and detention of innocent civilians; every day of imposition of the blockade on the Gaza Strip — is unlawful, regardless of the distorted legal and security pretexts presented by Israel. As such, the occupation itself, at its core and in all of its dimensions, is illegal and must end.

Under these circumstances, the responsibilities of the international community are clear, and upholding the law and holding Israel to account for its breaches become more urgent than ever. The illegal will not suddenly become legal because of such a so-called "regularization bill" by the occupying Power. The law – international law and as enshrined in numerous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions — is clear and remains unchanged.

Moreover, it is clear that the creation of such unilateral, illegal conditions on the ground — obviously intended to prejudge the outcome of negotiations for a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — will not be accepted, neither by Palestine nor by the international community. This was reaffirmed by the Security Council in resolution 2334 (2016), in which the Council "underlines that it will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations".

This and other provisions reaffirm the letter and spirit of the law and what has been repeatedly stated at every juncture: (a) a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must be based on international law and relevant United Nations resolutions; and (b) negotiations on that basis, not the unilateral imposition of facts on the ground, are the path for achieving such a just, peaceful and lasting solution.

The Palestinian leadership has firmly committed itself to both pillars, accepting the historic compromise of two States based on the pre-1967 borders in accordance with international law, United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map and engaging for over two decades in good-faith negotiations to end the occupation and achieve a just and comprehensive peace agreement and the rights of the Palestinian people. Most recently, this commitment has been reaffirmed in our declarations of respect for resolution 2334 (2016) and all provisions therein without exception. Palestine restates that commitment today, in spite of Israel's flagrant violations, which are destroying the two-State solution and causing the Palestinian people to lose faith in the possibility of ever achieving such a solution and in the prospects for realizing justice, peace and coexistence.

Indeed, our resolve, as well as that of the international community, is being severely tested by such relentless, illegal and provocative Israeli actions. This most recent measure by the Israeli Knesset must be firmly condemned and rejected. Israel must be demanded to cease and reverse these illegal measures and must be held accountable for this and all other violations that it continues to commit in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Serious efforts must be undertaken by the international community, particularly the Security Council, to implement resolution 2334 (2016) and all other relevant United Nations resolutions. This is vital both for salvaging the two-State solution and the prospect of a peaceful and secure future for both peoples and for upholding the rule of law, all of which are being gravely undermined at this moment.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 605 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 1 February 2017 (A/ES-10/742-S/2017/96), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations

United Nations S/2017/116

Security Council

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Letter dated 8 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to submit herewith the address to the nation, delivered on 5 February 2017 by the President of the Republic of Burundi, H. E. Pierre Nkurunziza, on the occasion of the twenty-sixth anniversary of the Charter of National Unity (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Albert **Shingiro**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Burundi to United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 8 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Address to the nation by the President of the Republic of Burundi, H. E. Pierre Nkurunziza, on the occasion of the twenty-sixth anniversary of the Charter of National Unity

5 February 2017

Dear compatriots, friends of Burundi,

I give thanks to God who always watches over us up to this day of joy when we commemorate the twenty-sixth anniversary of the adoption of the Charter of National Unity.

Twenty-six years have gone by since the people of Burundi pledged to revive unity. They hence decided to give a wide berth to anything that could set them against one another, and they committed themselves to fighting against anyone who could involve them in divisions based on ethnicity, region, religion and other evils.

I wish all Burundians, those who are inside the country as well as those who are outside the country, a joyful celebration of national unity, the very unity that is the cornerstone of sustainable peace and development.

The theme chosen for the twenty-sixth anniversary of the Charter of National Unity is "Let us consolidate national unity, a shield for sustainable peace and development". This is an opportunity for every Burundian to self-assess and commit himself or herself to consolidating the unity both in words and actions.

Thanks to the noble initiative taken by the people of Burundi to embark on the path of unity, this memorable day in the life of our country comes at a time when Burundians live in harmony and peace.

The main objective of this festive day is a soul-searching exercise, to revisit our past and remind one another of all the obstacles that undermined our unity, especially from the time when Burundi was placed under the colonial subjugation that prompted a political-based rule.

Our ancestors did not rely on written legal provisions to organize political and social life. The promotion of human rights, truth, justice and equity, respect for law and authority, mutual understanding and respect, the spirit of mutual aid and solidarity, good behaviour and other values, were part and parcel of the cultural heritage and customs of Burundi and were perpetuated through a legendary traditional education. Consequently, Burundians of yesteryear knew very well to distinguish between what is allowed and what is forbidden. They lived together in peace and harmony and were able to settle their sporadic disputes peacefully.

Prior to the colonization of Burundi, ethnicity and regions, which ill-intentioned people have used to divide Burundian citizens, were not meaningful. Indeed, the most important thing every Burundian highlighted in the socioeconomic organization was the big clan to which they belonged, the descendants of the same ancestor considered themselves as blood relatives. That was the starting point of

unity which could spread thanks to the gifts of cows and lands that they used to give one another and through intermarriage. In addition, we should bear in mind that even God always used a person or a family to bless a country.

Apart from that, every clan used to have a responsibility in the socioeconomic organization, a special gift from God that the clan offered to the pre-colonial Burundian society. Therefore, clans and families were viewed as complementary and interdependent. A breeder needed a labourer, a hunter needed a blacksmith, a clothes-maker needed a potter, the king and his officials needed cooks and cow-keepers.

There were people who helped the king govern the country in provinces, the royal defence and security forces, secretaries and ministers, blacksmiths, hunters, servants, prophets interpreting the signs of the times, milking servants, etc. Many of these people came from the clans of Baganwa, Bahanza, Bajiji, Banyange, Banyakarama, Babanda and Benengwe, and many other clans.

The clan was at the same time a reference and a mirror reflecting the personality of its members. A brave person from the family was the pride of his clan, while a villain in a family shamed his whole clan. It is in this sociological context that certain commonly used adages in Burundi are rooted, such as "He who eats a dog shames his whole clan or family" or "The king shall ask you your clan, not what you have eaten".

Most often, members of the same clan had a common ancestor, others shared geographical origins. You should know that clans such as Abajiji, Abacuri, Abanyakarama, Abaha, Abenengwe, Abungura, Abakiga, and others were shared by Bahutu, Batutsi and Batwa ethnic groups. It is obvious that the true unity used to be based on Burundian clans and families, and it is exactly this socioeconomic foundation that the colonizers undermined to destroy our national unity.

Considering the importance of the role played by the clans in the consolidation of national unity and in the light of the negative impact that their dislocation has had on Burundian society, where some people cannot recognize members of their clans and have therefore lost the sense of mutual help and solidarity, it is more than desirable to restore this legacy from our illustrious ancestors and to shrug off some beliefs and lies.

It is painful to see that some people kill each other on the basis of ethnicity, whereas in the beginning they were from the same clan, just as Cain killed his brother Abel which resulted in being cursed forever.

As our forefathers passed on us the ideals of love and unity, nothing can prevent us from following suit in their footsteps. This should even be our lifelong habit. Let us stop being stagnant, let us rather make progress from the level they have reached and, one day, when future generations analyse what we have gone through, they will say that if brave people had not intervened at the right moment, Burundi would have disappeared.

According to ethnographic studies undertaken by those who came to confuse us and to divide us on the basis of simple morphological details, people who do not belong to the same ethnic group cannot speak the same language and do not share the same culture and customs. Since the people of Burundi speak the same language

and share a culture and customs, on what grounds did Belgians divide Burundians into three ethnic groups?

No one can say that the terms Umuhutu, Umututsi and Umutwa are colonial inventions. The harm that the Belgians did was to manipulate and divert them with an objective and meaning that are completely different from the core meaning that Burundians used to give them. This became clear through the Royal Decree of 21 August 1925 of King Albert I of Belgium, reorganizing the administration of the Congo and Ruanda-Urundi colonies. That law lies at the origin of all the bad things and events that have cast shadows on Burundi so far, and even today that law has not been abrogated.

What caused the most sadness is that, even after Burundi regained independence, the foundation of national unity built by Prince Rwagasore and his valiant comrades in struggle was destroyed immediately and, as a result, Burundi was led by institutions that were favourable to the ideology and the plans of colonizers. Some Burundian citizens were persecuted because of an ethnic label that they were forced to bear while others were persecuted because of their region of origin. Some were killed, others were forced into exile, while Burundi was burdened by sorrow and tears, despair and trauma for many years.

Yes, it is true, 26 years have passed since we regained the national unity inherited from our forefathers. But today, no one would dare say that the Burundian unity is a finished project or a beaten path. So you would ask me: "What can we do to ensure that Burundi is marked by this unity, which is not deceiving, a true unity, a unity that one can recognize through words and deeds?"

- Considering that unity, concord and mutual aid are among the human values that have characterized the Burundian people, these must be taught to all generations, and they must be the object of exchange everywhere.
- Every Burundian is called upon to banish all language and behaviour that are likely to divide people and to ensure that national unity becomes the stanza and the refrain in everyday life.
- To recall and repeat unceasingly that, in our differences, we have the same mother: our homeland, Burundi.
- To love and make the motherland loved, and to keep the conviction that this is a common good. We must all feel proud to be called Burundians and demonstrate this dignity.
- Bear in mind that unity is strength and make sure that development projects and activities are organized to bring Burundians together.
- Ensure the visibility for all Burundians who live according to the ideal of unity, so that they serve as an example to those who are still behind.
- Remind us constantly that unity is the shield and the foundation for sustainable development.
- To ban all speech and attitudes that are likely to bring about divisions and any other behaviour likely to separate people and tear the Burundian social fabric.

- To bear witness to the truth, so that justice and equity may be restored to our country, Burundi, as they were before the arrival of the colonizers.
- To point fingers, denounce betrayals and disapprove massively of any attitude or behaviour that might plunge us back into the chaos of the past or make us lose our achievements.
- The patriotic education and training programme will include chapters that help people to understand and internalize the validity of national unity and the disastrous consequences of division.
- Let us know that what unites us is more significant than what divides us, and that our differences are riches, because they allow us to recognize ourselves as complementary to one another.
- To safeguard the values and traditions that always characterized our ancestors.
- I ask the media to reserve a sufficient time-slot to broadcast cultural and social programmes that strengthen the national unity.

This year, I launched a moralization campaign, to educate the population to demonstrate an attitude and behave in accordance with the highest human value: ubuntu. All citizens must draw their inspiration from the tradition of our forefathers. National unity will play a central role in the exchange workshops that will be organized.

We are doubly satisfied because there are clear signs that many Burundians have already understood the importance of advocating unity and strengthening it. The fairly recent events in which some selfish traitors, with the complicity of some foreigners who are used to dividing societies, have done their best to divide the Burundian people, without success.

The unity that we are celebrating today is therefore not a lesson learned, it is a good legacy left by our ancestors. You remember that even in the last stanza of our national anthem we sing this: "May unity, bravery and tranquillity prevail forever in Burundi". You will also remember that the national motto of Burundi begins with "unity".

Let me say that unity is a treasure that all peoples of the world rely on to achieve peace and sustainable development. We should therefore always avoid taking it lightly or neglecting it!

These days, we note that those who have invested in divisions and programmes to sow hatred among the Burundian population resemble an orchestra without a spectator, because there are not many who still trust or support them. Let us therefore remain in solidarity by reminding ourselves that national unity has always been the shield that has protected our country during the different crises it has gone through, and then let us always turn a deaf ear to those who nourish the dream of maintaining divisions within our population.

I invite all Burundians to complement each other, to feel at home in their country as sons and daughters of the nation, to combine their efforts despite their differences, to support any initiative aimed at improving the well-being of the population and, finally to achieve progress and development of our beloved homeland.

I take this opportunity to appeal to all Burundian refugees to return to their homeland so that they may contribute to building their country with their brothers and sisters, inasmuch as peace is a reality throughout the country. I ask all Burundians to show their legendary love and hospitality in welcoming their brothers and sisters who are returning to the country, to help them, to support them, to share with them what they have and to help them feel at home.

I would like to reiterate my exhortation to support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, today at work. In order to strengthen unity, all that has disrupted it in the past, such as lies, hatred, rumours, fabricated stories, hiding the truth, etc., must be brought to light. We will thus be able to make the decision of a fresh start of peace that God gave us without consulting anybody.

I wish for all Burundian citizens, without exception, to celebrate joyfully this anniversary of the Charter of National Unity. Let us consolidate national unity, a shield for sustainable peace and development.

May God bless Burundi and the people of Burundi.

May God bind us together in unwavering unity.

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Identical letters dated 8 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statements of the President of Georgia, Prime Minister of Georgia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the decision to hold a referendum in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, on 9 April 2017.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex issued as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 32, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kaha **Imnadze**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the identical letters dated 8 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Statement of the President of Georgia on the holding of a so-called plebiscite and presidential elections in the Tskhinvali region on 9 April

The plebiscite, election or any other action that envisages the free expression of the will of citizens cannot be implemented in the territory occupied by the foreign State where the majority of the indigenous population was expelled from as a result of ethnic cleansing and where the only force exercising effective control today is the Russian Federation.

Any attempt to change the name of the occupied region, without the consent of the central Government of Georgia, represents yet another action against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia directed towards the further annexation of Georgia's occupied territories.

We again call upon the Russian Federation to take real steps towards the deoccupation of Georgia's occupied territories and the implementation of its international obligations.

We appeal to the international community to stand up to the violation of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and any attempt to legitimize the outcomes of so-called elections and a plebiscite.

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the decision to hold a referendum in the Tskhinvali region

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia condemns the decision of the Russian occupation regime to hold a referendum on changing the name of the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, on 9 April 2017.

The Russian occupation forces intend to name one of the oldest regions of Georgia as "the republic of South Ossetia — the state of Alania", similar to the Republic of North Ossetia — Alania, in order to lay the groundwork for the illegal annexation of the occupied region. As early as 2008, after the military intervention in the Georgian territory, the Russian Federation recognized the so-called independence of the Tskhinvali region, in violation of the fundamental norms of international law, whereupon it pursues the factual annexation of the occupied territory. By naming Georgia's occupied region after the subject of the Russian Federation, Moscow is starting to use its remaining instruments against Georgian statehood.

Holding a referendum in the occupied territories of Georgia, while the ethnic Georgian population has fled as a result of ethnic cleansing and the occupying Power fully controls the situation on the ground, is illegal and cannot have any legal effect, irrespective of the outcomes. This is yet another act of aggression by the Russian Federation, fully neglecting the fundamental principles of territorial integrity and the inviolability of the internationally recognized borders of a sovereign State and is aimed at undermining the established international order.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia appeals to the international community to demonstrate a consistent and firm stance towards the illegal actions of the Russian Federation, take the appropriate measures to avoid the escalation of the situation in the Tskhinvali region and to prevent another fact of illegal annexation in Europe.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also calls upon the Russian Federation to cease its provocative policy towards Georgia, respect the fundamental principles of international law and to withdraw its military forces from the territory of Georgia in accordance with the commitments under the Ceasefire Agreement of 12 August 2008.

Statement of the Prime Minister of Georgia on the holding of a referendum in the Tskhinvali region

In response to Georgia's peaceful policy and efforts seeking reconciliation and confidence-building between the populations divided by the occupation lines, the Russian Federation, unfortunately, continues to take steps towards the increased isolation and annexation of Georgia's occupied territories.

This is evidenced by the recent decision to hold a referendum on naming the Tskhinvali region similar to a subject of the Russian Federation, which once again exposes the true intentions of the occupying Power to incorporate Georgia's integral regions.

According to international law, it is unlawful and unacceptable to hold a referendum in a region from which tens of thousands of residents have been expelled as a result of ethnic cleansing and where effective control is exercised by the occupying Power.

I urge the international community to join forces and stand up to the Russian Federation's provocative actions in order to prevent violations of the territorial integrity of sovereign States and the imposition of the practice of unlawful annexation, which undermine the region's stability and the international system stemming from democratic values.